

Enabling Laws

ACT 244 of 2009, ACT 296 of 2009 (appropriation), Act 602 of 2009 (general improvement appropriation)

History and Organization

The Arkansas Geographic Information Office (AGIO) was created in 2001 as a division of the Department of Information Services (DIS) by the passage of ACT 1250. Its purpose is to coordinate the development and maintenance of geographic information systems (GIS) data throughout the state. The AGIO coordinates with all levels of government, private and non-profit sectors to reduce duplication of effort. The office works in conjunction with the Arkansas Geographic Information Systems Board. In 2009, the AGIO became a state agency with the passage of ACT 244 (HB 1356 of 87th General Assembly).

The Office operates GeoStor, Arkansas' GIS clearinghouse, where the state's GIS data is published for users. The Office works closely with County Assessors who are mapping real estate tax parcels, County Judges and E9-1-1 coordinators who are mapping the road centerline file and with county floodplain managers in support of FEMA's Flood Map Modernization Program. The Office is also responsible for maintaining the aerial imagery program that procures aerial imagery of the state.

The parcel mapping focuses on the development of tax parcels that are listed in the counties' computer-assisted mass appraisal system. Parcel mapping improves the efficiency of the Assessor reappraisal process. The data aids the Assessors in discovering taxable real estate. The data is used by the banking industry, Realtors, surveyors, floodplain administrators and others to view information about properties. One of the most valuable uses of the data is for economic development where prospects can research and evaluate potential sites for development without having to conduct an initial visit.

The road centerline program compiles a standardized road centerline map layer that can be used by all levels of government, the private sector and individuals. The data is one of the most commonly needed datasets by GIS users. The AGIO helps the County E9-1-1 offices with the technical facets of creating and maintaining centerline data. The data can be used to locate people, places and events along the roads by correlating them to a physical address. The AGIO assembles a statewide version of the data by incorporating updates from individual counties as roads are changed or new roads are built. The layer is heavily used following disaster and emergency response events. This layer in combination with address point coordinates is used to drive the state's Streamlined Sales Tax database that supports collection and accurate distribution of county and city sales tax. The system added over \$7 million in sales tax revenue to the state in 2009.

The AGIO plays a supportive role in FEMA's Flood Map Modernization Program by providing local and statewide GIS data used for the digital flood insurance rate maps. It also ensures the quality of the data based on FEMA's guidelines and standards. The AGIO also assists county floodplain managers with GIS data requirements.

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The aerial imagery is a special type of photography that is corrected for terrain distortion and encoded with the latitude and longitude coordinates. This enables the data to be used in a number of applications. Because a picture is worth a thousand words, this data is the most popular GIS data published by the agency. It is used by County Assessors to locate and discover real estate, by County E9-1-1 office to map roads, by numerous state agencies for a variety of purposes and by private sectors including real estate, land surveying, engineering, utilities, agriculture and forestry . The AGIO procured this statewide image database in 2001 and 2006 with General Improvement funding. The data is also provided to commercial Internet search engines so that GIS users worldwide can access it, and entrepreneurs can potentially make more informed business decisions.

The AGIO continues to work with Arkansas counties, state and federal agencies to ensure the accuracy and self-maintenance of GIS data about Arkansas for decision makers.